

# Invasive pine beetles

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According to the U. S Fish and Wildlife Service, the pine beetle is thriving across the Intermountain West because of a “ perfect storm” of extended drought, warm winters and old, dense forests (qtd.

in “ ‘ Perfect Storm’ Fuels Mountain Pine Beetle Epidemic | Wyoming Business Report”). Pine beetles are invasive species that are affecting ecosystems in this country and must be controlled. To understand the threat of pine beetles, it is important to understand where they are found. Pine beetles are a naturally occurring insect found in pine forests in the Rocky Mountains, and they are also found in areas west of the Continental Divide. (“ Banff National Park of Canada “). In the past they have not been recorded northeast of the Rocky Mountains; however, that does not mean they weren’t there, it means there was a lack of surveying.

Pine beetles are able to survive winters farther north than previously thought (“ Banff National Park of Canada”). Pine beetles live for about one year. Pine beetles kill trees. According to Mander, in Northern Colorado and Southern Wyoming, the trees are dying and turning red. Most of these trees are lodgepole pines being killed by the mountain pine beetle. Female beetles, about the size of a grain of rice, bore into trees and release pheromone.

Pheromone attracts male beetles to the food supply. The beetles feed on the trees phloem; phloem is the vascular tissue in plants that conducts sugars and other metabolic products downward from the leaves. When the beetles feed on the phloem, it takes the nutrients from the roots to the crown of the tree, which overwhelms the trees ability to get nutrients eventually killing it from lack of nutrients. According to Pelzer, the last aerial view near Casper,

Wyoming, shows that nearly 314, 000 acres of pine forest in Wyoming have been killed off. Global warming plays its part in this process too. Because of the warmer Winter's, the population of the Pine Beetles are not being killed off as much as in normal years.

Our ecosystem has been greatly affected by pine beetles even though they occur naturally. Due to our climate change, they are out of control. Once the beetles start feeding on the pine trees there's not much we can do to control them. We must take preventive action in our forest to keep the beetles from spreading. Works Cited " Banff National Park of Canada.

" Parks Canada. N. p., 22 Feb. 2012.

Web. 06 Mar. 2013. Mander, Brigid. " Pine Beetles ATTACK!" JH Weekly. N. p., Wednesday Apr. 2009. Web. Pelzer, Jeremy.

" Experts: Pine Beetles Are Eating Themselves out of Wyoming." Casper Star-Tribune Online. N. p., 30 Mar.

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